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A LETTER TO THE CLERGY OF THE CHURCH of *ENGLAND*:

On Occasion of the COMMITMENT of the Right Reverend the

LORD BISHOP of *ROCHESTER*

To the *TOWER* of *LONDON*.

By a Clergyman of the Church of England.

LONDON,

Printed: And Sold by J. ROBERTS near the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-Lane*. M DCC XXII.

3 033 234

AC911.1722.P42

A

LETTER

TO THE

CLERGY of the CHURCH of *ENGLAND*:

On occaſion of the Commitment of the Right Reverend the Lord Biſhop of Rocheſter *to the Tower of* London.

My Reverend Brethren,

I Queſtion not but by this time you are alarm'd with a report, that the Right Reverend the Lord Biſhop of *Rocheſter* has been by order of the King and Council committed to the Tower of *London* for high Treaſon: The Commitment of a Prelate of our Church, upon ſo high a Charge, has been ſo rarely known among us ſince the time of the Reformation, that it may well appear ſurpriſing, and will, I hope, create a Curioſity in you of examining what I have to offer upon this important affair in the following diſcourſe, both with reſpect to his Lordſhip, and to our ſelves the reſt of the national Clergy.

[I.] That the Welfare of the Church of *England*, and the Safety and Honour of all its Teachers in particular ſhould be the conſtant aim and endeavour of our Government, is a thing both Reaſonable in its ſelf, and highly for the Intereſt of the Publick: For my part I have theſe great points as really and as much at heart, as any man has or pretends to have. I love it in it's Faith and it's Diſcipline, and have ſeen and known ſo many of its Clergy, men of clear Reaſon and well-temper'd Candour (and always having a degree of Candour proportion'd to the clearneſs of their Reaſon) that I dare defy any man to produce me a Church or even to draw up a Scheme of one, which does more than This, in its real conſtitution, conſult either the Honour of God, or the Knowledge of Truth, or the Benefit of Mankind in general, and of this Nation in particular. This our civil Governours are, I am perſuaded, firmly ſatisfy'd in; they cannot deſire or wiſh for a Church that pays more deference and ſubmiſſion to the State, or that does more, upon Principle, take the meaſure of its temporal Authority from the appointment of the Legiſlature: As it is therefore their Intereſt and Duty, ſo I verily believe it is their Inclination and Endeavour carefully to ſupport it; and it would be highly Unreaſonable in us to think, that, whenever their Cenſures fall upon any of our Order (as they do in the caſe now before us), they act, notwithſtanding theſe two powerful motives to the contrary, upon either Paſſion, or Prejudice, or Miſrepreſentation.

In what light this extraordinary affair may have been ſet before you, I preſume not to gueſs; probably in the Worſt, and cloath'd with Circumſtances which may give you ſome Suſpicions that not only this Prelate's Perſon but his ſacred Office too is diſgrac'd by this Commitment. But I take the liberty to affirm, becauſe I may do it with Truth, that the diſtinction of a Private and a Publick character was well obſerv'd upon this occaſion, and that he met with all the Civility, I may ſay, Tenderneſs, which could poſſibly be ſhewn to any one under circumſtances reſembling his: For the Perſons directed by Order of King and Council to ſeize his Lordſhip and his Papers, receiv'd a ſtrict command to treat him with Reſpect and Reverence: When examin'd by a Committee of Council, he was permitted to ſit down, and was heard with patience and reſpectful attention in all that he had to offer on his behalf: and what was more unuſual, he was allow'd, after that he had withdrawn himſelf, to enter twice into the Council room, and there either alledge or requeſt ſomething in his favour: when he was committed, no marks of Triumph on the ſide of the Government attended him to the Tower; but, as the heart of an unhappy man would wiſh, he paſs'd privately and without

out any Guards to that which is the moſt Honourable place of Confinement.

Such an Indulgence, upon a charge of ſo heinous a nature, ſhewn by the Government (after that it has experienc'd from the laſt Rebellion how Mercy may be thrown away upon and even miſuſed by the Stubborn and Unthankful) to one of the Epiſcopal order, and who is therefore, if guilty, more inexcuſably guilty; eſpecially to one of ſuch Figure in the World on many accounts, as that men will generally ſuppoſe him, if concern'd in any Conſpiracy, to have taken no leſs ſhare in it, than the Contrivance and Conduct of the whole: ſuch an Indulgence, I ſay, when rightly conſider'd, may go a great way in appeaſing thoſe little Jealouſies and Suſpicions, which you did perhaps harbour within you upon the firſt Receipt of this News. I know that it is Natural for men of all Societies, even of incorporated Trades, tho' never ſo mean in the eſteem of the World, to be alarm'd at any thing which may ſeem to reflect Diſhonour on them as a Body, or which brings the Perſons of their particular Governours in danger; for where there is an Union of Intereſt, there is always a common Jealouſy of Danger: but why ſhould not We, Gentlemen, who are bred up to Letters, and have receiv'd that generous Education in our Univerſities, which is uſually thought not unworthy the Youth of the higheſt Quality? why ſhould not We, who underſtand how to diſtinguiſh and ſeparate thoſe things in our minds, which the Unwiſe and Unlearned confound, ſee clearly that it may be Reaſonable and Neceſſary for the Government to animadvert upon one of our Order, even in the ſtricteſt manner, at the ſame time that it reverences the holy Function, with which he is inveſted? Beſides the obvious Reflection, that his Majeſty during his whole Reign has paid a ſtrict and conſcientious regard to the Rights and Property of every one of his Subjects (which I ſhall only mention, becauſe the Proof of it is eaſie and open to all men,) I ſay beſides this, there are two or three Conſiderations which do weigh much with me and incline me to think, that nothing but Juſtice and the Neceſſity of State mov'd our Civil Governours to act in this manner.

The one of which is the great reſpect which the Order of Biſhops does now meet with at Court above what was ever known to have been paid them in former Reigns: It has been his Majeſty's Continual and, I think, Prudent rule to conſult or be directed by his Biſhops in the diſpoſal of his Preferments of every rank in the Church: they have frequently recommended and ſucceeded in their recommendation; they have always had the liberty of giving their Advice upon this Subject, and hardly one Inſtance has been known, where any

Employment

Employment of conſiderable influence in the Church has been filled without the conſent and approbation of ſome at leaſt out of that venerable Body: and this is ſuch a condeſcending behaviour in his Majeſty, as I am ſure all Eccleſiaſticks, even thoſe who diſlike the Channel in which the ſtream of Preferments runs at preſent, muſt be pleas'd with, as the beſt method for Us in the general, and as a fair Pattern which he ſets to his Succeſſors. What can we wiſh for more than to have the ordering of our Intereſts in our Own hands? what can be more engaging in his Majeſty, or ſhew a greater Truſt placed in, and Deference paid to the Judgment of his Biſhops, than to ſhare (as it were) this his Royal Prerogative with them, and make himſelf in this particular but a kind of Executer of their Pleaſure? Here then let us rejoice upon a View of the Happineſs of our Church, and reject with ſcorn that Promiſe, which He the Mock-Majeſty at *Rome* is ſaid by his Adherents to have made, that "if ever he be reſtor'd, "the diſpoſal of all Biſhopricks and other Eccleſiaſtical Preferments "belonging to the Crown ſhall be lodg'd in the hands of the Biſhops." ——— why, we have this Privilege already, we poſſeſs it, we feel the happy effects of it: for my part (not to mention that perhaps this mighty Promiſer means the Biſhop of *Rome* and other Popiſh Biſhops now conceal'd among us, as thoſe with whom he intends to lodge this right of Diſpoſal) I ſay for my part I will never depend upon him for the performance of Promiſes, who, if he comes, muſt come with a Sword in his hand; and I ſhou'd expect ſoon to ſee, that (as *Milton* expreſſes it better than I can do)

——— *Eaſe would recant*
Vows made in Pain, as Violent and Void: Parad. loſt. book 4th.

however at beſt I muſt call in queſtion that Man's Diſcretion, who would give up the Writings of his Eſtate, which are now in his own keeping, in a comfortable hope of hereafter receiving them ſafely back again.

The other conſideration, which, as I ſaid, inclines me ſtrongly to believe that only Juſtice and the Neceſſity of the State moved our Civil Governours in this important affair, is that till the time of this Diſcovery his Lordſhip has had a full weight of Regard and Reſpect paid to his Merit at Court and in the great Council of the Nation: whatever applications he has made to his preſent Majeſty, (and ſome he has made) have been always receiv'd and anſwer'd favourably: Whenever in the honourable Aſſembly of Peers he deliver'd his Opinion about the Publick Affairs of the Nation, even when he oppos'd

pos'd all the measures and endeavours of the Ministers of State, they were always observed to answer his Arguments with Candour and Good-manners; and tho' he usually express'd himself with all the Elegance of Language, with all the Justness of Delivery, and in the most decent Gesture of an Orator, yet was it the Civility of his Audience more than the Weight of his Eloquence which gain'd him Attention: for Eloquence is a blunt Tool with men of Reason, when it comes from a Suspected person; it is indeed a sharp arrow and a poison'd one too, when it is in the hands of him whose Designs are Evil and not known to be so; and therefore, as it is what scarcely one in a Thousand can ever arrive at, so scarcely one in Ten Thousand can safely be trusted with it.

I may add another consideration, which should dispose even the most Disaffected Subject to think, that this Commitment had a Just and even a Necessary Foundation, I mean the Unpopular View in which such an Action uses to appear among us: it is not many years since the Impeachment of one of our Order, inferior to this Prelate in Station, but much more so in personal Abilities, alarm'd and almost turn'd up-side-down this Nation; the men then in power felt the weight of it, and saw (but too late, when they were forc'd out of their high Stations) that the reverence which men pay Us rises in proportion to our distress, and that it is much safer at some seasons to lay the *Loins* of the Law upon a Layman, than the little *Finger* of it upon a Clergyman. This Rock upon which they then split, and the Storms which were then rais'd about them by the breath of popular clamours and discontents, are no doubt still fresh in their minds: and no one can imagine that, under less than an absolute necessity, or for a weaker reason than the imminent danger of the State, they would be willing to steer a course that has any resemblance to the former, and run the hazard of a second State-shipwreck.

However it must be consider'd that the Commitment of this Prelate differs highly from the abovemention'd case and from that of the seven Bishops in a late Reign; the Doctor was censur'd for something spoken in one of his Sermons, that is, for something thought blameable in the immediate execution of his Office, as a Clergyman; but this Prelate is charg'd with Designs and Actions allow'd by all to be wholly foreign to his Function: The seven Bishops were guilty of nothing but only presenting in a decent and respectful manner their Petition to King *James* II, and were without pity committed to the Tower, when their Case was in its nature Bailable; but the Charge against this Prelate is no less than that of high Treason, no less than an endeavour to subvert the present Royal Family, and to put all our Rights and

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Properties in confuſion: His Lordſhip is ſo ſenſible that this Crime is not in its nature Bailable (unleſs on default of the Government to bring him to Tryal) that I verily believe he has not once attempted, or entertain'd a hope that he might be admitted to Bail.

But if any diſcovery has been lately made, I mean not of general diſaffection to this Royal Family, nor of any attempts and offers immediately upon the death of the late Queen; but of Deſigns lately form'd by him in conjunction with others to ſubvert our Conſtitution, and place upon our Imperial Throne one grown up under the very Wing of the Papal See, with only a bare poſſibility of preſerving to our ſelves, upon his hoſtile approach, either our Liberties as *Britons*, or our Religion as Proteſtants; ſhould he, I ſay, be diſcover'd to have attempted or any way contributed to this black deſign, nay ſhould the Government only have ſtrong and well-grounded ſuſpicions of his having attempted it, there is no conſidering man, I am ſure there is no good ſubject, but muſt ſee clearly not only the Juſtifiableneſs but even the Neceſſity of his Commitment: I mean of his Commitment to the Tower; for to have confin'd him in his own houſe, wou'd have been Unſafe for the Government; to have deliver'd him over to the care of a Meſſenger wou'd have been Diſparaging to Him; and both would have been Unuſual and contrary to the known forms of proceeding in matters of high Treaſon.

Upon ſuch a Diſcovery, ſhould any ſuch be made, we might ſay, Happy had it been for his Lordſhip, if in the midſt of that Plenty and Honour which he enjoy'd, he could have made a full meal of Happineſs upon them; but more happy are We, the Clergy of the Church of *England*, for upon us the firſt fury of triumphant Popery is ever likely to fall: the Shepherds muſt be removed, before the Flocks can be diſperſed: and we have great reaſon therefore to take up the ſame form of thanks-giving words, which this very Prelate uſed, upon a like occaſion, in one of his Sermons preached at Court in the late King *William*'s reign; and ſay, "Bleſſed be "God, who did not utterly caſt out our Prayers and Supplications, "but delay'd only to anſwer them till a day of Salvation, till an ac- "ceptable time, *when we were alarm'd with Invaſions from abroad and* "*Conſpiracies at home*, and when Men threatned to ſwallow us up "quick.

I preſume that there is no Proteſtant among us who believes that a Biſhop, as a Biſhop, is or ought to be exempt from Civil Enquiries: that erroneous notion was baniſh'd from our Iſle with Popery long ago; and the King's Supremacy over all his Subjects is not doubted by any member of our Church: indeed while a Prelate acts within his

his proper Sphere, a larger portion of Reſpect is his due; the Government, as well as private men, ought not raſhly to ſuſpect or take up an accuſation againſt him; for the Integrity of his character is the beſt ſupport of that Authority which he ought to have in order to govern well thoſe who are in his Dioceſe and under his Epiſcopal Inſpection: This he has a right to from Scripture and by the reaſons of State: but whenever any one of that high Station acts contrary to his Religious Character, and foments Civil Wars and ſtrikes at the Eſtabliſhment of his Country, it is his Intereſt that his ſacred Office be not regarded in the Queſtion, leaſt it ſerve only to aggravate the crimes prov'd upon him, or (to ſpeak the language of the great St. *Paul*) to make his *Sin exceeding Sinful*. It may be conſider'd farther, that a Conſpiracy is equally dangerous to the Government, whether it be carried on by Lay or Epiſcopal hands, by one that wears a Sword, or a habit of Lawn. That State muſt be unwiſe to a Proverb, which will not take the ſame neceſſary precautions againſt the one as the other; for the care of the Publick is above any private regard, becauſe it includes in it all other Relations, whether Natural, Civil or Eccleſiaſtical. His Lordſhip indeed is almoſt the firſt Prelate ſince the Reformation, who has ſeen the Tower upon ſuch an occaſion as This; and the Novelty of the thing, which now alarms us, ought in reaſon to be eſteem'd the Glory of our Church: had this ſight been more common, we ſhould have been leſs Surpriz'd now, but more Aſhamed in the general. For my part I cannot but look upon this as an Inſtance of ſteady and impartial Juſtice, ſuch as every Government ought to obſerve: and I would not wiſh my ſelf a Member of a more *Platonick* Commonwealth, than where every man who enters into ſuch meaſures as endanger my Liberty, my Property or my Religion, be he Civil or Sacred, wear he a Garter or a Mitre, is upon diſcovery of his deſigns brought to a fair Tryal, and does upon Conviction pay that Debt of Puniſhment, which the known Laws of his Country demand.

Having now given you this account of the Affair before us, which may perhaps be ſatisfactory to thoſe of you who live in the remote parts of this Kingdom, and to whom common Reports do uſually come with ſome mixture of Untruth, if not of Malicious Falſhood, it will, I hope, appear to you (for this is the Subſtance of what I have ſaid,) That it is the Intereſt and Inclination of the preſent Miniſtry to conſult the Honour of our Church; That in particular his Lordſhip was at his Commitment treated with all decent civility and reſpect by the Government; That our Biſhops were never more eſteemed and truſted at Court than they now are, and therefore no Prejudice is there harbour'd againſt his Epiſcopal character; That no man had more re-

gard paid to him by the Court and the Miniſters of State, than his Lordſhip had, and therefore we cannot ſuppoſe them to be prepoſſeſs'd againſt his Perſonal Character; That nothing but Neceſſity could have induced them to this action which is in its nature ſo Unpopular, and has been in a former caſe Dangerous; and laſtly, That the Juſtice and Safety of the Nation requires that all Delinquents be conſider'd and cenſur'd as Delinquents without any regard to the Office, or Title, or Honour which they bear.

[II.] And now let me addreſs my ſelf more immediately to You, my Brethren and fellow-labourers in the ſervice of Religion; and I have two requeſts to make to you; the firſt is to thoſe of You (and the number I truſt is very large) who do ſubmit to his preſent Majeſty's Government for Conſcience ſake, that you will, by your more earneſt endeavours for the future to ſupport our Conſtitution, wipe off the Stain which our Order has receiv'd from this melancholy accident; the other requeſt is to thoſe of You, who wiſh for a Change, that you will conſider from hence, how dangerous all Plots are to the contrivers of them, and what a ſilly purchaſe you will have made, if ever your Wiſhes and Attempts ſhould prove ſucceſsful.

1. §. To the firſt ſort of You, I mean the Friends of our Eſtabliſhment, give me leave to repreſent that with too many men we lie under the Scandal of being a Reſtleſs and Ungovernable Body: The charge, I know, is not a True one; but it would grieve the heart of a Good man to find that there ſhould be any, the Leaſt, handle for ſuch an unworthy aſperſion; for Sedition and Treaſon in a Clergyman is an accumulated Crime, it is a whole Cluſtre of Sins in one, and has many more Aggravations, when committed by Us, than by any Others; For

We have all ſolemnly dedicated our ſelves to the Miniſtry of Holy things, we have turn'd our backs upon the Cares of a Secular calling, and have confin'd our ſelves to the more immediate ſervice of Religion: ſo that for Us to be concern'd in Publick affairs, which are not made part of our Duty by the Laws, even tho' we ſhould act in them Uprightly, is hardly Juſtifyable, and may well ſeem a temporary Departure from the buſineſs of our Calling: Beſides, we the Inferior Clergy know ſo little of Facts, the very diſcharge of our Duty puts us ſo out of the way of knowing the Truth of State Facts, that Therefore we never had yet much reputation for our Skill in judging of publick matters: Why then ſhould we quit that ſacred Province, in which our Fellow-ſubjects will eaſily allow us to be able Judges of Divinity, for That in which (let us confeſs it freely, for all the World knows it,

it, and I think it our Credit) we are not, we cannot well be able Judges of Politicks?

We are all men appointed to promote the Peace of Mankind, and to preach the Doctrines of Obedience to the Higher Powers in being, and of mutual Love and Goodwill towards one another; and can it ſeem leſs than a vile Hypocriſy or a direct Disbelief of the great Truths of Scripture, if we give any juſt occaſion for our civil Governours to ſuſpect Us as Seditious and Diſaffected Subjects? We ſay (and rightly too) in our Sermons that we are an order of men Neceſſary to Government, let us then by our Actions prove this Truth to thoſe who think otherwiſe of Us; we are, ſome of us, Eloquent and Copious enough in proving that Society cannot long ſubſiſt without Teachers of Religion, let us then, I beſeech you, make it viſible to all Men, that we endeavour to ſupport the Society in which we are ſo happily planted, and labour with all our Power to diſappoint the Attempts of thoſe who would overturn it. We of all men do with an ill Grace endeavour to work up our Audience into fury, eſpecially againſt the State; it is the very Reverſe of our Profeſſion, and is juſt ſuch a Soloeciſm in Divinity as Superſtition in Philoſophy.

We are to conſider our ſelves ſtill farther as (in ſome ſort) Penſioners of the State which we live in: Leaſt this be not underſtood as it is meant, give me leave to expreſs my ſelf more clearly by ſaying, that, tho' we have a Claim from Scripture and Reaſon for a Maintenance in the labour of the Goſpel, yet the particular Aſſignment of that Portion, which we enjoy, is the free-gift of our Government; or, if any one will make a difficulty in allowing This, yet he can not deny that the large Revenues, as well as the Honours and Privileges, attending the higher Stations of the Church do entirely flow from the bounty of our Laws, and are the Penſions which a wiſe Society pays to its diſtinguiſh'd Eccleſiaſticks, for the Reward of their uncommon Piety and Learning, and of the Pattern, which they are ſuppos'd to give, of Submiſſion to their civil Governours: ſome of us enjoy not only what is neceſſary for the ſupporting us in the ſacred buſineſs of our Calling, but have an Abundance ſufficient to make us ſit down in the rank of the Great and Wealthy; and to enable us to become our ſelves Patrons and Benefactors to Merit in Diſtreſs: And I have often thought, that, if ſome among us, who have been the warmeſt Advocates for the Divine Right of our Incomes, were ſtrictly to take the meaſure of them from what is ſaid concerning them in the Goſpel, they would loſe at leaſt one half of their Revenues in the dangerous Experiment, and perhaps have but the Tithe left them of what they now enjoy from the Munificence of

the Legiſlature. This therefore is an Argument of much weight, and may teach us, that, as our Civil Governours are our Benefactors, whoever reſiſts them, muſt appear baſely Unthankful, and cannot ſhake off his Obedience without taking upon himſelf a full Load of the Infamy of Ingratitude.

After all theſe Ties, which no Teacher of the Goſpel, no Grateful man can break thro', we muſt ſeriouſly and frequently conſider farther, that we are all bound by the moſt ſolemn Oaths of Allegiance, and Abjuration: We have all in open Court, before multitudes of Witneſſes, in the preſence of publick Magiſtrates, with a loud Voice *declar'd in our Conſcience, before God and the World*, That *our Soveraign Lord King* George *is Lawful and Rightful King of this Realm*; That we *do believe in our Conſcience that* the Pretender *hath not any Right or Title whatſoever to the Crown of this Realm*; That *we do renounce, refuſe, and abjure any Allegiance or Obedience to him*: That *we will bear Faith and true Allegiance to his Majeſty King* George, &c. That *all theſe things* we *do plainly and ſincerely acknowledge and ſwear, according to the expreſs Words by* Us *ſpoken, and according to the plain and common ſenſe and underſtanding of the ſame Words, without any Equivocation, mental Evaſion, or ſecret Reſervation whatſoever.* Nay we have gone farther than all this, and have ſworn (for with this the Oath cloſes, and our Subſcription to it is upon Record) that we *do make this Recognition, Acknowledgement, Abjuration, Renunciation and Promiſe heartily, willingly, and truly, upon the true Faith of a Chriſtian.* And now that this Gordian Knot is faſten'd on our Conſciences, which no Art or Time can looſe, nothing but Violence and Wickedneſs can cut, how muſt we appear to the World, how black, how deteſtable, if we act contrary to this ſacred Engagement! how much muſt the Chriſtian Religion, how much muſt even Natural Religion be weaken'd by ſuch a behaviour in us! Believe me, Brethren, that no Imputation, no Stain can ſtick ſo faſt to our Church as This; it is a Stab almoſt in a Vital part, and only a viſible contrary behaviour in us can be the effectual remedy in a caſe of ſo much danger.

We cannot indeed help the faults of a few, very few, I hope, among us, who have transferr'd their Obedience to One in another Country, and gone ſo far for an Object of it as the very Boſom of Popery: let them anſwer for themſelves with their Fortunes and their Lives, if need requires; but this we may do, we may ſhew that the Corruption is not General, and that the Ill humours have not ſpread themſelves thro' all or many parts of the Eccleſiaſtical Body: I cannot but in Reaſon, as well as Charity, firmly believe, that there are many thouſands among us, who have never yet bowed the Knee

of

of Homage, no not in Intention, to the Italian *Baal*; to such therefore I speak at present, and conjure them by all that is Sacred and Dear to them, that they will from henceforward exert themselves in all wise and discreet manner, and testify both by their Actions and Discourses, that their Allegiance is still unshaken, and that it has Reason and Conscience in them for its support; for now, when the Reputation of our Church, as well as the Duty of a Subject calls upon us, now to be Silent, is to help forward the Scandal, and to be backward in promoting Loyalty, is almost to Rebel against not only the State but our Religion too.

I know well enough that many of Us, who in our hearts are faithful Subjects, by living in remote parts of the Nation and by hearing every publick action misrepresented, or ill-told at that distance, have entertain'd little Jealousies about the designs of some in the Administration: and I shou'd more regard this if there ever was a time in any reign, when the Case was otherwise: Call back the Memory of any, the most belov'd, Prince, and see whether his Subjects, who were placed far out of sight of the Scene of Affairs, and who knew nothing but by uncertain Hearsay, did not even in his days suspect and murmur, or give themselves the greater Liberty of Complaints and Outcries about the actions and designs of their Superiors: tho' Then the Good or Ill mananagement of the State was the only Question, but Now we are concern'd about no less a matter than the Change of the whole Constitution; and men who have this avow'd aim, will naturally be more Active to increase the National Jealousies and Suspicions: so that all Abatements being made and the murmurs of those who wish for the Pretender being deducted (for such men would equally rail at any King, except their own) I do not know, but we have a less proportion of Clamours and Discontents now prevailing among us than ever we had.

We are all persons of some Experience in the World, and have gain'd a Knowledge of Men as well as of Books; we cannot therefore but have observ'd, How easily and how generally the actions of Princes and the affairs of State are misrepresented: *the Heart of Kings is unsearchable*, said one of our divine Heroes in Wisdom, I mean *Solomon*; and he spoke Truth; for the Intentions of private men, much more of those who move in the highest Sphere, are undiscoverable; they may have been Evil, tho' attended with a good Event to the Publick; and they may have been Good, tho' not rewarded with an answerable Success; this reflexion therefore may serve to instruct us, that we ought not to entertain uncharitable Thoughts concerning the Thoughts of others; since at the very time that we do this, we read

a Lecture to our ſelves upon the Folly of it, in venturing at it meerly on a Knowledge that we are Safe, and that our Thoughts cannot be diſcover'd by them: We, who live nearer to the great Scene of publick buſineſs, ſee with what Diſadvantage of Story, with what Trick of Miſreport moſt of the Actions and all the Deſigns of Stateſmen are publiſh'd among the vulgar: and it requires no uncommon penetration to ſee how little Credit the Hiſtories of former Ages do generally deſerve, when we can know ſo little of the real and undiſguis'd Truth of our Own: But ſome things cannot be miſrepreſented or miſtaken; a man may judge aright of what he feels and ſees: I call upon you therefore, in the moſt ſolemn manner, to ſit down calmly, and to ſpend a few minutes in examining within your ſelves, whether ſince his Majeſty's firſt arrival among us our Religion does not ſtand upon the very ſame firm Eſtabliſhment as formerly. Is it's Faith, or it's Diſcipline in any one ſingle Inſtance changed? has not his Majeſty, by his Royal Aſſurances and Injunctions, frequently declar'd his reſolution to ſupport our Church in its preſent Form, and call'd upon us not to ſpeak and act againſt it's ſacred Doctrines and decent Diſcipline? Produce an inſtance of the contrary, if you can; but let not Suſpicion, let not Imagination paſs for Argument in a caſe of this importance: To come a little more home to our ſelves, Do any of us find that we have not the ſame Rights and Revenues as uſually? Do any of us meet with Diſturbance or Diſcouragement, when we act within our Circle, and preach up the Doctrinal or Practical points of our Religion? or do any of us diſcover a decay of Reſpect and Reverence towards us in our Neighbours, while we confine ourſelves to the *Labour of Love* and are exercis'd about the proper allow'd buſineſs of our Calling? Nothing of all this can be alledg'd by us; and therefore I muſt believe that this general diſcontent, (which all men ſee too viſibly) is a kind of vapours in the Nation: it is ſick of one knows not what, and to be cur'd one almoſt knows not how: but the conſequences of it may in time be fatal, for he who murmurs, forwards the buſineſs of him who rebels, and the breath of the Complaining Subject blows that Publick Fire which the hand of the Traytor is kindling

2. §. Before I finiſh this Diſcourſe, I have one requeſt more to make, and it is to thoſe among us (very few, I truſt, in number) who wiſh for a Change, and not only deſire but attempt a Rebellion: I ſhall not uſe with ſuch as you, Gentlemen, the Arguments which I have juſt now enforc'd; for what is your Calling, what is Gratitude, what is the Obligation of Oaths to You? vain, and idle names in your Opinion!

Tyes

Tyes only upon the ſcrupulous and unenterprizing! well, be it allow'd ſo for once; I have ſtill material arguments to offer you, even your Intereſt and your Safety, and the poorneſs of the Prize for the ſake of which you ſet your Lives and your Fortunes, the Happineſs of your Selves and your Poſterity at Stake. I will ſuppoſe you now, as under no one obligation to his preſent Majeſty more than to the *Pretender*; as left to act wholly upon the principles of Prudence and Diſcretion; and I doubt not to convince you, (at leaſt to make it out clearly, whether you will be convinc'd or no) that You ought to ſit down quietly under the preſent Adminiſtration, and be content with it, even in the ill light in which you ſee it, rather than run the greateſt of hazards in favour of one of the leaſt promiſing Reſtorations.

You ſee from preſent Inſtances, and from the accounts of almoſt all former times, that Plots are generally unſucceſsful: they are the unfaireſt Game which men can play at: the moſt cheating Lottery which they can be engag'd in: the proſpect of great Profits and high Prizes to be gain'd by them does too often inſnare the unwary and unexperienc'd: but for one that has ever in any age ſucceeded, an hundred have miſcarried: they require ſo many Accomplices, ſo many expert to contrive, and active to manage: who are almoſt all men of neither Honour nor Probity, and Men of ſuch various Tempers, and of ſuch differing degrees of Firmneſs and Reſolution, that it is almoſt next to a Miracle, if no diſappointment befall them, or no timely diſcovery be made of the Conſpiracy: One is deſirous to have a larger ſhare in the management of the Scheme, than Another is willing to allow him; One is ſuſpicious of the Courage of his Accomplice to go thro' the deſign without wavering; Another perhaps is jealous, that tho' he has Courage enough, yet he has not the Gift of Secreſy; and every one has this ill-fate hanging on him, that he is not only to guard himſelf from the Suſpicion of the State, but from the treachery of his fellow Traytors; ſo that every man, thus engaged, plots in ſome ſort againſt his Brother Plotter, and endeavours to be as much diſguis'd and conceal'd from this his Friend, as from his Enemy, the State: no wonder then that under all theſe Diſadvantages ſo few Seeds of Rebellion riſe up, when ſo many are daily ſow'd: —— Come now and let us reaſon together; if this be the precarious and ſlippery condition of all Plots againſt the publick, will a wiſe man venture all that is Dear to him in ſo rotten and ſo unpromiſing a bottom? is not the Loſs of Life and Eſtate the known effect of a Miſcarriage in things of this nature? or is it not worth a Traytor's while to reflect that (if he ſets himſelf and his fortunes at a low value) yet he runs a dangerous

ha-

hazard of leaving his Widow in Sorrow and Want, and his Children heirs to nothing but the Infamy of their Father?

But ſuppoſe that his Plots ſhould prove ſucceſsful: ſuppoſe the *Pretender* were peaceably placed upon the throne of this Nation: what is likely to be the mighty reward of this Traytor's hazardous Labour? do not we all know, that after the Reſtoration of King *Charles* the Second, paſt ſervices were neglected, the greateſt part of thoſe who ſuffer'd for him and effected his return were forgotten, and the maxim of State was at that time "Gain your powerful Enemies over to your "Intereſt, your Friends are Yours already": and who knows but this doctrine in Politicks might again prevail? at leaſt who does not know that in ſuch caſes the more conſpicuous Merit of a few Leaders ſwallows up all the Merit and all the Reward of the multitude of Inferiors? Let us imagine then that You have your King here put in quiet poſſeſſion of this Crown, and your ſelves have gain'd your Wiſhes, but miſs'd of your Recompence: What ſort of Monarch then is This likely to prove? how much fitter to promote the publick good, than his preſent Majeſty? or how are Murmurs and Complaints likely to ceaſe in this fancied golden age?

In the firſt place remember that the *Pretender* is a Foreigner, and more ſo, than the moſt ſpiteful among you can charge his preſent Majeſty with being: our King has liv'd now above eight years among us, and has had all poſſible opportunities of knowing our Intereſts and the nature of our Conſtitution, not from Books, but Experience: the *Pretender* was never in any part of *Great-Britain* except a few Months here in his earlieſt Infancy, and, ſince, a few days in an obſcure corner of *Scotland*, made remarkable chiefly by his infamous Flight and Deſertion of his beſt Friends in the worſt article of Danger: he hardly knows what an Engliſh face is, except from the dejected and repining ones of ſome few (for almoſt all his Miniſters and Favourites are *Scots*-men) about his Court at *Rome*; and is wholly a Stranger to that Chearfulneſs (the Effect of Plenty and Freedom) with which moſt men do and every man may ſit down here in his own houſe, under his preſent Majeſty King *George*'s happy Adminiſtration.

It ought much to be conſider'd, that the *Pretender* has never ſojourn'd in any Nation, where the King was not Arbitrary, and the Body of the Subjects miſerable in compariſon with Ours: Tyranny he may have learned, but not the gentle Government of a limited Monarch: He may have ſeen what it is for a Prince to be Powerful, but not what it is for the Subjects to be Happy: and poſſibly he may think, that ſince we are a Happy people, it is to our Happineſs that

he has owed all his Misfortunes, and that therefore it will be his Intereſt to leſſen it as ſoon as he is able.

Nor is it leſs to be conſider'd, that continual Diſappointments muſt have ſower'd whatever natural Chearfulneſs or Tenderneſs of mind he had: He would come hither freighted with a full meaſure of Reſentment and Revenge, and breathing Anger and Fury againſt all ranks of men among us; tho' not perhaps to be vented immediately, yet to be ſhewn viſibly upon the firſt opportunity of putting the inflam'd thoughts of his Heart in Execution:

Κρείσσων γὰρ Βασιλεὺς, ὅτε χώσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ·
Εἴπερ γάρ τε χόλον γε κὴ ἀυτῆμαρ καταπέψῃ,
Ἀλλά γε κὴ μετόπιθεν ἔχει κότον, ὄφρα τελέσσῃ,
Ἐν σήθεσιν ἑοῖσι. *Homer's Iliad. book 1ſt.*

Nor leſs, that he muſt have large demands upon our Eſtates (upon the Eſtates of All of us in general) for the ſatisfying his debts contracted with almoſt every Popiſh Prince in *Europe* and with almoſt every ſubſtantial Papiſt here in *Great Britain*; who will all no doubt, foreign Princes eſpecially, ſet down to his Account the Penſions they have paid him, and the Sums they have advanced him, as ſo many debts to be diſcharged, when they find him in a Capacity to repay them.

Nor leſs, that with him muſt be reſtor'd and releas'd from their Outlawry a ſet of poor and ill-cloath'd Courtiers and Miniſters of State, ſome of them wholly unknown to us, and others too well known to be admir'd; all having long ſince ſeen the laſt of their Money and their Credit too; and therefore having, beſides their Reſentments to gratify, large Wants to be ſupplied, and being not only Hungry after our Riches, but even Greedy and Ravenous: A reſtoration therefore of ſuch as theſe wou'd have every part, except the name, of a Deſtruction, and we ſhou'd have, I fear, too fatal a reaſon to apply to them, what *Cicero* ſpoke concerning ſome of the Roman Generals in his time, *ipſorum adventus in urbes ſociorum non multum ab hoſtili expugnatione differant.* Orat. pro Lege Manil.

Nor leſs, that he comes, if ever he comes, a Papiſt, and that from *Rome* it ſelf the Mother of Popery; zealous for the advancement of a Religion, which can no more ſubſiſt or keep fair terms with Ours, than the Element of Fire can with Water: Popery, tho' now prohibited and diſcountenanc'd among us is an active and reſtleſs thing: and do we think that thoſe, who are Stirring in Adverſity, will not be

Insolent in Prosperity? can we imagine that the Members of that Church have less Courage when Conquerors, than when Subdu'd; when Triumphant, than when kept under Subjection?

Think therefore and reflect within your selves, I entreat you, whether it be not highly probable, that the Condition of the Nation, nay that your Own happiness, will not be mended and improv'd even upon this change of Monarchs, which you so warmly desire: for are not Pensions and Bribes then, when the Court will be made up of the Poor and the Needy, more likely to be matter of general complaint than now? should we not be then more jealous of encouragement given to Papists under the Reign of a profest Papist, than we are now of encouragement given to Dissenters under that of a profess'd member of our Church? would all Plots, think ye, and Conspiracies then cease? or should we not even then be continually alarm'd with new troubles and reports of new commotions? would none, do you believe, have the Spirit, the Bravery (for such I will venture to call it) to attempt the replacing our *British* Sceptre in a *Hannover*-hand, and the recalling a reign under which we have experienced the Sweets of Freedom in our Civil and Ecclesiastical condition? Assure your selves that there are clear heads and warm hearts and active hands on the side, where our present duty lies, and

Euryale, audendum dextrâ Virg. Æn. book 9th.

will be the Motto which many a zealous Lover of his Protestant King and Protestant Religion will then constantly wear about his heart.

But I have hitherto shew'd you only the best side of the prospect, by supposing the *Pretender*'s return to be a Quiet and a Peaceable one: this is not likely to happen; it is more probable, nay it is certain in all human appearance, that his Arrival must be attended with Battles and Sieges, and must (to use the words of our inimitable *Shakespear*)

Let loose the Dogs of War.

It is not in the nature of his present Majesty easily to Fear, nor in the hearts of his faithful Subjects to desert him in the season of danger: All the Protestant States in *Europe* are bound by Interest, and many Catholick Princes by Treaties, not only to countenance, but to assist him with their forces against all foreign pretensions to his Throne and Title: then will Tumults and Alarms be loudly heard among us; then will all the Evils of Civil Rage and Wars be felt by us; then will the Blood of Countrymen and Kinsmen be spilt, and even the Conquerors themselves will stand on the Field of Battle

tle crown'd with a melancholy Victory, and ſtain'd all over with the infamous marks of Slaughter, Murder and Parricide——— But I will purſue this unwelcome thought no farther; it is enough to make a better head, than mine, giddy at the Reflection.

Upon the foreſight therefore of all theſe things, which in ſuch a caſe are Likely to happen, methinks a conſidering Nonjuror, or even a good-natur'd and publick-ſpirited Papiſt ſhou'd repine at the proſpect of ſo melancholy a day, and ſcarce wiſh to receive him, whom in his Conſcience he believes to be his Rightful King, upon terms of ſuch diſadvantage to his Country; at leaſt I muſt ſuppoſe, and I do firmly believe, that thoſe of our Order, who do now at a diſtance hope for the Arrival of that *Idol of Majeſty*, wou'd be frighten'd and diſpleas'd at the near approach and preſence of it; they would change their Tale with the weary *Labourer* in the Fable who had called upon *Death*; and would wiſh the invok'd danger was once gone, and the fancied Burthen well laid on their Shoulders again.

In a view therefore of your Intereſt (for Conſcience is here out of the Queſtion with You, who have broke thro' the moſt ſolemn Oaths and therefore cannot pretend to be Conſcientious) I ſay, for the ſake of your viſible Intereſt ſit down in quiet and attempt nothing againſt the Government, tho' you do not approve of it; or if you have ſtill any regard for Conſcience, conſider the following Argument: Should the *Pretender* ever gain admittance here, he cannot cenſure your Submiſſion to the Powers in being; becauſe it is provided by an act of *H.* 7. that none ſhall be deem'd a Rebel, who acts againſt a diſpoſſeſs'd Prince, in favour of him who is in actual poſſeſſion of the name and office of King: Nay his preſent Majeſty then has a legal right to the Submiſſion even of thoſe who think another to be the rightful Heir of the Crown; and tho' you ſhould be fully perſuaded that no Laws, no reaſons of publick Safety can exclude the *Pretender*, yet may you ſatisfy your Scruples in paying Obedience, becauſe it is a Legal one, to the preſent Eſtabliſhment; *wherefore* (for I may from hence juſtly draw the Apoſtle's Concluſion) *ye muſt needs be ſubject, not only for Wrath, but for Conſcience ſake.* But ſhould you Miſcarry in your attempts, who can promiſe that even this Merciful Sovereign, whom your Rebellions do daily provoke, will not turn his deſpis'd Clemency into a neceſſary Rigour? When the Hatchet or the Halter ſtands prepar'd for you; when no Pardons or Reprieves can, in Juſtice to the Publick, be any longer indulg'd you; when his Majeſty ſhall be forced to put on the ſtern Countenance of Severity, which nothing but Neceſſity can

make him wear, then we may Pity you as Misguided men, but we cannot be otherwise than pleas'd with your Fate, as you are Conspirators against Our Safety; and the gentlest reproof, which we can afford you as your last Farewell, will be that beautiful Apostrophe, which *Virgil* has us'd upon mentioning the punishment of a Traytor against the State of *Rome*,

——— *At tu dictis, Albane, maneres.*

Virgil's Æn. book 8th.

F I N I S.